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THE BAY OF PIGS OPERATION

Volume III Evolution of CIA's Anti-Castro Policies, 1950 - January 1961

Part I

Background

A. Watching from the Sidelines

Fidel CASTRO RUZ was identified in one of the earliest reports in Agency files as "one of the young, 'student leaders' in Cuba, who manages to get himself involved in many things that do not concern him." 1/ Beginning in 1948, the activities of Fidel Castro came to be of increasing concern to the Central Intelligence Agency and to the United States Government (USG). By early 1960 the USG officially adopted a covert action program designed to remove the Castro government from control of the island of Cuba. The policy of the USG was to be carried out by the Central Intelligence Agency and would culminate in the operations at the Bahia de Cochinos from 17-19 April 1961.

Beginning in 1948 and continuing even after the United States had formulated its official policy of removing Castro from the leadership of the Cuban Government, the principal questions faced by CIA's Western Hemisphere Division, by the Department of State, and by other concerned principals in the United States were: What is Fidel Castro? By whom is he controlled? What does he represent? Is he, or is he not, a Communist? The nature of the Agency's interest in answers to these questions is reflected in various of the records for the period beginning in the mid-1950's when it appeared that the Agency depended in considerable part on the reporting from the American Embassy offices in Havana.

Commenting on a report entitled "Antidemocratic Antecedents and Activities of Fidel Castro" prepared by President Batista's Military Intelligence Service (SIM) -- apparently in response to a request from the Buró de Represión a las Activadades Communistas (BRAC)* -- to the Counselor of the American Embassy (Amembassy) in Havana, Lincoln Vinton Chapin, told the CIA representative among other things, that:

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* Bureau for the Repression of Communist Activities.

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> The SIM report is nothing more than a summary of allegations and accusations made against Fidel Castro during the period 1948-1950. This summary has apparently been slanted in an effort to make Castro a "Rojo," but the result is a rather poor one. 2/

The Department of State reporter refuted, on a paragraph by paragraph basis, all of the allegations which indicated that Castro had been tied in with Communists, or Communist sympathizers, ever since his university days; and in forwarding the report to Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, the COS Havana indicated that he was furnishing the information because of renewed interest by the State Department in Fidel Castro. 3/

The tenor of State reporting continued in a similar vein well into 1957. Charges that Castro was a Communist could not be substantiated, but State did note that in his student days, he "was involved in gangster-type activities." 4/ Havana Embassy reporting also reflected another of the problems of continuing concern to the US Intelligence Community -- would Castro have sufficient force to oust Batista, and were his basic feelings toward the US friendly. 5/

In the mid-1950's, Havana Station ran seven approved FI projects, most of which were aimed at the Cuban Communist Party, the PSP (Partido Socialista Popular). Agency funds also were used to support the efforts of an anti-Communist organization engaged principally in propaganda activities. 6/

Lyman Kirkpatrick, CIA's Inspector General, apparently accompanied US Ambassador Gardner and his party to a meeting with President Fulgencio Batista in the summer of 1956, a meeting which prompted the Cuban President to write to the DCI, Allen Dulles, in praise of the meeting.* 7/ In fact, Agency support for the peaceful transfer of power from Batista to a democratically elected successor and amnesty for Castro and his followers, as well as other anti-Batista dissidents, was proposed in a memorandum from the Inspector General in November 1957. 8/

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* David R. McLean, a former member of the IG's Inspection Staff, attached a cryptic note to the copy of Dulles' letter of response to Batista, which he, (McLean) included in the file of miscellaneous documents on the Bay of Pigs, which were inherited by the present author. McLean suggested that Kirkpatrick helped organize BRAC, but the present author has not confirmed this story.

In view of subsequent developments, one interesting suggestion made by the Inspector General in November 1957 was the following:

> On the island of Cuba, probably only a US citizen, in some way known to be connected with the US Government and "assumed" to be backed by Washington, would have the ability to act as intermediary between the various opposition groups in the Batista Government and work out a possible "cease fire." This would have to be done covertly, and any results achieved either not ever publicly announced or certainly not advertised until after the election. Any public attempt to bring peace would be foredoomed to failure by each side probably indicating exorbitant demands and then being unable to withdraw from its announced position.* 9/

Although it may have had no relation to the Kirkpatrick memorandum, on 25 November 1957, less than a week following the Kirkpatrick memorandum, William Wieland of the Department of State notified Adolf Berle, one of the country's leading experts on Latin American Affairs and a former member of the

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* It is interesting to speculate whether at this time Kirkpatrick was thinking of William D. Pawley, former US Ambassador to Brazil and Peru and an American businessman who operated significant enterprises in Cuba, to negotiate with Batista. Within a year's time, Pawley, who also stood high in the ranks of the Republic Party contributors, was designated to undertake such a mission to Cuba.

State Department, that he was enroute to Cuba, according to Berle, "to see whether anything can be done to bring the Cuban revolt to any kind of an orderly conclusion." 10/

Berle, with remarkable prescience, noted:

> It is rough going, anti-intervention is all right up to a point. But we are responsible for keeping order in the hemisphere quite aside from the proprieties, and a rather bolder policy in that regard seems indicated. 11/

By early 1958, the Agency had become sufficiently concerned about the pro-Communist orientation of Castro's government, and particularly the pro-Castro proclivities of his two principal deputies, Ernesto Che Guevara and Raul Castro Ruz, Fidel's brother, that penetration of the Partido Socialista Popular was a priority concern of the field. At least two agents were successfully placed in PSP ranks, and in March 1958, one Agency officer managed to join the Castro forces in the mountains for a period of two weeks and to observe their tactics in combat. In June 1958, Robert D. Wiecha, COB, Santiago de Cuba, got himself "captured" by Raul Castro's forces in order to be able to assist 29 US sailors and marines and 15 US

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businessmen who had been kidnapped by Raul Castro. In both instances, the Agency representatives returned unharmed; and both reported on the "radical" and anti-American nature of the Castro movement. According to one source, Wiecha found "definite communist overtones" among the Raul Castro forces.* 12/

Additional documentation of the pro-communist nature of the Castro organization was reported with great frequency during 1958 from contacts the Santiago de Cuba Base had in Oriente Province. Whether Castro's contingent was communist oriented or not, others such as Adolf Berle and his friends (both in and out of State Department), continued to reflect their concern about the possible ways to combat the growing strength of the Castro movement in Cuba. 13/ Berle was most hopeful that the Castro situation could be remedied by cooperation among Latin American liberals working in conjunction with some of the more enlightened Cubans who had broken with Castro (for example, Felipe Pazos and Pepín Bosch) with additional support from the OAS

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* The historian for WH Division provided the figures on US captives shown here, but Hugh Thomas indicates 19 US businessmen and 27 servicemen were captured.

-- and only minor participation from the US Department of State. 14/

At a time when the Agency's fears about the Castro movement were increasing, a rather different proposal was put forward by the Chief of the Paramilitary Division, Political and Psychological Staff, of the Clandestine Service. Rather than trying to whip Castro, Alfred Cox suggested that perhaps the wisest move for the Agency would be to join Castro. It was apparent, according to Cox, that since Batista was on the way out, we should now try to remedy Castro's hostile attitude toward the United States because of our efforts to prop up Batista. To accomplish this, Cox suggested that:

> A practical way to protect United States interests in this matter would be to make secret contact with Castro, assure him of the United States sympathy with some of his objectives, and to offer him support. The individual chosen to make the contact should be of such background that it is clear that he speaks with the authority of the United States Government.
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> Obviously, the support must be given covertly so as not to endanger United States relations with Batista. The most effective means of help to Castro would be arms and ammunition. Air dropping of

> this equipment might be dangerous from the security aspect. Allowing a shipload of equipment manned by a Cuban crew to evade our Coast Guard would probably be a better method. The most secure means of help would be giving the money to Castro, who could then purchase his own arms. A combination of arms and money would probably be best.* 15/

By late fall of 1958, when it became apparent that the Batista regime in Cuba was about to go under, the Agency in conjunction with the Department of State supported a plan to have Batista bow out more or less gracefully and to have the government of the country taken over, not by the Presidential candidate who had been elected in the rigged election, but by a junta pending subsequent free, democratic elections. When traveling to Miami with William Snow, an Assistant Secretary of State, and Henry Holland, formerly a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Col. J. C. King, Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, met with William D. Pawley on 18-19 November 1958 to discuss a plan which would have Pawley travel to Cuba to meet with Batista in an attempt to convince him to bow out gracefully. Pawley was a long-time acquaintance and friend of Batista from the days when Pawley had been running the Cubana Airline.

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* Not all Agency reporting out of the Cuban area was biased against Castro. One report in the fall of 1958 indicated that Castro definitely was not a Communist, citing as a reason for this: "Ninety-five percent of his followers are good Catholics. Three Catholic priests have joined Fidel Castro and his forces in the Sierra Maestra, and one has joined Raul Castro and his troops in the Sierra Cristal. The rebel forces under the Castros, therefore, have four chaplains, while the entire Cuban Army does not have a single chaplain. (Source comment: The United States should not be taken in by President Fulgencio Batista's attempt to label the revolutionary movement as Communist inspired, dominated, or influenced.)" 16/

The source for this evaluation of Castro was, as one might surmise, a Catholic priest.

In return for Batista's support for a friendly military junta -- nominally to be responsible for his ouster -- the representatives of the Department of State and the Agency agreed that Batista should be provided safety for himself, his friends, and his close cronies, particularly those whose lives would be endangered should there ever be a truly violent overthrow of the government. Batista also was to be provided protection for his personal assets in Cuba. Various individuals were identified as possible candidates for the junta, and, according to King, the objective was that various of these members would have sufficient political strength to weaken Castro's support.

Following the meeting in Miami, Pawley did undertake the mission to see Batista in Cuba. Arriving on 8 December in Havana he had a series of preliminary meetings with the Cuban Foreign Minister, who strongly supported the proposals that Pawley indicated that he was going to make. Unfortunately, however, the Foreign Minister told Pawley that it was unlikely that Batista would accept the proposals. The meeting between Pawley and Batista actually took place on 11 December 1958 when, according to the report from Havana station:

> Pawley met with Batista for two hours this evening. Laid his plan before Batista without pulling any punches. B[atista] took it calmly. He agreed with much of Pawley's analysis of situation, but said he could not take the junta way out. 17/

Batista made no promises, and went through the reasons why he couldn't possibly give up the office -- for fear of being called a coward and traitor; that there would be a blood bath; and that he had both moral and constitutional obligations. COS Havana noted Pawley's evaluation of the meeting as follows:

> Batista will not accept plan, and will make every effort turn government over to Rivera Aguero [the Batista candidate who had been named Presidential successor in a rigged election]. However, unfavorable developments may produce change of attitude on part of B[atista]. 18/

Following Pawley's visit with Batista, the situation in Cuba deteriorated rapidly and the policies of the US Government regarding Cuba were ambivalent. A representative of the Archbishop of Havana, Father Bez Chebebe, approached the American Consul in Santiago to float some proposals for resolving the differences between the two countries. The priest emphasized that although a Castro take over was inevitable:

> Both Fidel Castro and US interests had important stake in sugar crop and both undoubtedly wish resolve problems caused by present situation. Also said that there were matters now mostly minor on both sides which have been sources mutual irritation and misunderstanding and that these should be eliminated soonest, so that they would not grow to affect future relations, which Father considers inevitable. 19/

In addition, the representative of the Archbishop of Havana indicated to the Amconsul that:

> He though[t] US Government could profitably send person of confidence,

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> not necessarily an official, to discuss mutual problems as discreetly as possible with Fidel. Implied that such would be well received. 20/

Despite the fact that the communist proclivities of Fidel Castro and his cohorts had been clearly stated by Agency personnel in Cuba, on 18 December 1958, COS Havana cabled Headquarters strongly supporting the position that the Archbishop of Havana's representative had proposed to the American Consulate, saying:

> Havana Station feels proposal merits serious State/CIA consideration. Operation this nature could pay big future dividends if fully qualified person could be found for job and dispatched quickly. Regardless how we may feel about Castro and his movement, both will be important political forces for a long time to come. Perhaps candidate could be found through National Catholic Welfare Organization. 21/

At about the same time this proposal was being put forward, WH Division had asked the Paramilitary Division (PMD) to establish a small contingency task force, capable of making air drops into Cuba. Two representatives of PMD, [3] and [3] were sent to Havana -- [3] to locate and survey possible drop zones and [3] to get himself into position to see if he could locate dissidents who were both anti-Castro and anti-Batista. What WH hoped to accomplish, presumably, was that they could organize these anti-Batista and anti-Castro dissidents and get them armed in time so that they could prevent Castro from taking over the government if Batista should suddenly resign or decide to flee the country. 22/ On 31 December 1958, Paramilitary Division reported to WH Division that a Helio Courier was already in place in Key West with a backup Helio in Washington; a sterile C-54 had been requested from Europe; and the Office of Logistics would have an arms load rigged for a drop by 2 January 1959. 23/

It was not until the last week of December 1958 that President Eisenhower became actively involved in discussions and decisions affecting US policy toward Cuba. His interest was precipitated by a 23 December 1958 Memorandum on Cuba which had been prepared by the Acting Secretary of State and sent to Eisenhower's National Security Adviser, Gordon Gray, who discussed the memorandum with Eisenhower and the DCI on 26 December. The President apparently indicated that he had not been fully aware of the positions of State and CIA regarding Castro, and he suggested that meetings of the Special Group under NSC 5412/2 should be held on a weekly basis, with Cuba to be a regular subject for discussion.

Gordon Gray and Allen Dulles had some differences of opinion concerning the advisability of reading other individuals into the act. Gray suggested that the President's Board of Consultants (later the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board) be made party to the discussions, but Dulles rather strongly suggested that there was a significant difference between the discussions which were intended for the Special Group 5412 on Covert Operations, and PFIAB responsibilities for general problems related to foreign intelligence. Dulles made the specific point that if the Board of Consultants was going to get involved in the details of planned covert operations, they were then in a position of reviewing US foreign policy. The discussion also seems to have verged on the right of Congress to attempt to oversee covert operations -- a point about which Eisenhower expressed himself very strongly, noting that such action by Congress would be an infringement of his prerogative as Commander-in-Chief. 24/

At 3:40 on the afternoon of 31 December 1958, there was another high level meeting attended by Messrs. Herter, Murphy, and Rubottom, Department of State; Irwin, Department of Defense; Admiral Burke, the CNO; General Cabell, DDCI; and Gordon Gray at which the Cuban situation was again discussed. Even as the meeting was in progress, Batista was preparing to flee Cuba; and possible US action, including direct intervention by US Marines, was among the topics that were discussed. There also was some suggestion that the US take the responsibility for naming members to a junta to succeed Batista, rather than permitting Fidel Castro and his followers to take over the Cuban Government. 25/

With some benefit of hindsight, Eisenhower recalled this period in the following manner:

> During the rush of these last events in the final days of 1958, the Central Intelligence Agency suggested for the first time that a Castro victory might not be in the best interests of the United States. (Earlier reports which I had received of Castro's possible Communism were suspect because they originated with people who favored Batista.)
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> "Communists and other extreme radicals appear to have penetrated the Castro movement," Allen Dulles said. "If Castro

> takes over, they will probably participate in the government." When I heard this estimate, I was provoked that such a conclusion had not been given earlier.

At another point, the ex-President wrote:

> Though our intelligence experts backed and filled for a number of months, events were gradually driving them to the conclusion that with the coming of Castro, Communism had penetrated this hemisphere. 26/

B. Castro Takes Over

During the first few weeks of 1959 following Castro's take over, there was a flurry of activity as Havana Station attempted to keep track of the changes in government. The Station seemed assured that it was cognizant of all of Castro's movements, especially on the developing military capabilities. In fact, when the US Army suggested that the Station provide support for the Army's covert collection of military intelligence under commercial cover in Havana, COS took strong exception to the proposals, emphasizing the Station's own capabilities in this area. COS was overruled by Headquarters, however, and General Cabell assured the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence of the Army that while he was aware that Havana had objected to the Army's proposals, the COS nonetheless had been "instructed" to cooperate.* 27/

In these early weeks of 1959, US representatives in Havana were predicting that Castro would have a difficult time holding his government together, and among other things, one report emphasized the probability that Castro would soon find that he would have to get along with the United States. 29/ The most likely threat to relations with the United States was the existence of the naval base at Guantanamo Bay, but neither CIA nor State Department representatives saw any threat to this installation, and this belief was supported in early March 1959 by a Special National Intelligence Estimate that, at most, Castro "sooner or later [is] likely to ask for major increases in the nominal rent now paid for the Guantanamo Base, revision of employment practices which appeared to discriminate against Cuban workers, and perhaps other changes." 30/

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* An interesting side note to the discussions at this time was that the Army Attache apparently had planned to use a negro Lt. Col. who was on TDY in Havana to do a study of the new Castro Army. In a memorandum to the Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, and to the Chief, Foreign Intelligence Staff, Al Cox, Chief, Paramilitary Division reported -- without ever using the term "black" -- that General Erskine (Army Special Forces) believed that a "color bar" did exist in the Caribbean area and that a better choice than Lt. Col. Reuben Horner, the black officer in question, could be made. 28/

In the early spring of 1959, as Castro made known that he was planning to visit the United States, COS Havana revealed ambiguous feelings about the importance of the Castro trip. He noted for Headquarters information that:

> Washington visit can make or break Castro. Unless he gets a strong helping hand from the United States, many serious observers feel his regime will collapse within a matter of months. 31/

Pointing to the serious economic difficulties of the new Cuban Government, COS Havana indicated that Castro's popularity was very low among the middle and upper classes, but at the same time he emphasized that Castro was "the idol of the masses." 32/ COS Havana did an excellent job of predicting how Castro would act when he arrived in the United States, suggesting that Castro would probably make his pitch, not to the heads of the State Department and to the press, but that he would appeal to the workers, the farmers, the students, and the masses in America to support his revolution. COS emphasized that Headquarters should make no mistake that the Castro Government, while not openly avowed Communist, was heavily infiltrated with Communists and had taken no stand in opposition to Communist positions, and, moreover, there was little question about who would eventually control the Cuban Government. COS did suggest that Headquarters give serious consideration to planting embarrassing questions with reporters to stick to Castro while he was in the US. 33/ Both the Department of State and COS Havana were in general agreement about the results of the Castro visit. COS Havana summarized one of his dispatches as follows:

> It would be unwise to assume from the minor indications to date that Fidel has undergone a serious change of heart as a result of his visit to the United States. 34/

In a memorandum to Gordon Gray, President Eisenhower's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Robert Murphy, Deputy Undersecretary of State noted that:

> Despite Castro's apparent simplicity, sincerity, and eagerness to reassure the United States public, there is little

> probability that Castro had altered the essentially radical course of his revolution. From his experience here, he has gained a valuable knowledge of American public reaction which may make him a more difficult man to deal with on his return to Cuba. It would be a serious mistake to underestimate this man. With all his appearance of naiveté, unsophistication, and ignorance on many matters, he is clearly a strong personality and a born leader of great personal courage and conviction. While we certainly know him better than before, Castro remains an enigma; and we should await his decisions on specific matters before assuming a more optimistic view than heretofore about the possibility of developing a constuctive relationship with him and his government. 35/

With the benefit of hindsight, it seems that in this period shortly following Castro's visit to the United States the COS Havana may have misjudged a significant development which surfaced almost immediately after Castro's return to Cuba. Remarking on an apparent rash of anti-Communist statements appearing in the Cuban press, one dispatch speculated that:

> These demonstrations obviously welcome, but possibly most significant aspect is demonstration once again, enormous power Castro, who with few words made anti-Communism popular position. By same token he could reverse trend at any time, and skeptics speculating that current stand is sop intended to make it more difficult for U.S. interests to protest effectively against stringent agrarian reform law. 36/

A follow-up dispatch within two days of that cited above provided a more accurate insight as to the depth of the struggle which was, in fact, being waged within Cuba between the pro- and the anti-Communist factions. Reporting on comments made by the Executive Secretary of the Partido Socialista Popular (PSP) with reference to the confusion among party members regarding statements that Castro had made while he was in the United States, Anibal Escalante laid it on the line that there was a struggle between the left and the right; and he emphasized that the conservative element was trying to take advantage of remarks which Castro had been forced to make while in the United States. According to the source reporting on Escalante's talk, Vice-President Nixon had told Castro that unless he broke his alliance with the Communists, the United States would cut off economic aid to Cuba; and this threat had struck Castro as so serious that he made some unwise statements. The source, however, noted that the liberal forces of the 26 July movement in the Directorio Revolucionario (the DR), were in control of the revolution, and that the duty of the PSP was to work toward unity and overcome the counterrevolutionaries. 37/

In a Special NIE of 30 June 1959 on *The Situation in the Caribbean through 1959*, the intelligence community again indicated that the internal situation in Cuba had not been decided. The SNIE commented:

> The Communists probably do not now control Castro, but they are in a position to exert influence in his regime, and to carry on further organizational work. 38/

Through the summer and into the early fall of 1959, the degree of Castro's commitment to Communism continued to be a major subject of discussion within the intelligence community; and in the weekly reporting that was begun by COS Havana in early June, this topic continually occurred. In August 1959, when the Deputy Chief of Western Hemisphere Division, Rudolph Gomez, assisted Leo Churn in the preparation of an "Urgent Report on Cuba" for distribution to members of the Research Institute of America, Castro's Communist association was prominently featured. At this time, and reflecting the views of both Western Hemisphere Division and the Department of State with whom Gomez had coordinated the paper, Fidel Castro was not considered to be a Communist. His brother Raul Castro, however, was clearly identified as a hard-core Communist.* 39/

The internal problem to which Anibal Escalante had referred in mid-summer came to a head in mid-October 1959 when Hubert Matos, a military leader in Camaguey Province and formerly a strong supporter of Castro, broke with Fidel over the increasing number of leadership positions which were being turned over to members of the Communist oriented PSP rather than to members of the 26 July Movement. Matos resigned as military leader of Camaguey on 19 October 1959 and was arrested on 20 October. During the months prior to his trial in December 1959, when he was found guilty of treason and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment, a number of others who had been prominent anti-Batistianos also broke with Castro. Among these were Faustino Perez, Minister for Recovery of Illegally Acquired Property; Rufo López-Fresquet, Minister of Finance; Manuel Ray, Minister of Public Works; and Felipe Pazos, head of the National Bank who was removed by Castro and replaced by Che Guevera, whose expertise was in revolution not in banking. As Theodore Draper has said, this was the second civil war for Castro. 40/

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* In view of the trend of recent years, it is interesting to note that the Church report found reason to be somewhat critical of the Senate Internal Security Committee (Sen. Eastland's Committee) for getting involved in matters which were principally of concern to the intelligence community. In this case, the Senate Committee was criticized specifically for taking Diaz Lanz, the head of Castro's Air Force who had defected, and questioning him before turning him over to the intelligence agencies for initial interrogation.

Coincidental to the internal squabble that led to Matos's resignation, the Deputy Chief of WH Division, Rudy Gomez, was in Havana (15-18 October 1959) promoting an increase in Station efforts to penetrate the PSP. In the course of this tour, the qualifications of the best of the agents who might conduct this penetration were reviewed with COS Havana and Station personnel. Gomez also pointed out that the anti-Communist efforts in Havana should not be limited to those who were FI or PP designees, but everyone in the Station was urged to take advantage of opportunities to push into the Partido Socialista Popular. In reporting on his visit with COS Havana, Gomez noted that the Ambassador and other members of the American Embassy in Havana also were very much interested in the program being advanced; and, in fact, asked Gomez if CIA could "send a qualified Communist expert to Havana to indoctrinate appropriate Embassy officers on Communist doctrines, particularly on their modus operandi and how Communists working under cover could be recognized." Upon his return Gomez received J. C. King's approval to comply with this request.* 41/

Even as Gomez was promising State's representatives in Havana assistance in understanding Communist activities, J. C. King, Chief of Western Hemisphere Division, was going forward to the Director of Central Intelligence with a memorandum complaining about the Department of State's failure to provide CIA with a policy action paper on Cuba -- a paper which, according to King, had been promised as early as May 1959, yet had not been received by the end of October. Nor was there any indication when such paper might be expected, despite numerous meetings with Department representatives. King also was particularly critical of the fact that Ambassador Bonsal had been called to Washington on two occasions, but in neither instance had he called on the Agency for consultation -- this despite the fact that there had been indications from the Department that such consultations were to be held. 42/

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* It would appear from this request that both the DDP and State were remiss in the training of their overseas personnel. That the Station had to request Headquarters for support on such an issue is difficult to imagine.

The ambivalence regarding Castro's relation to the Communist Party was illustrated by the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence on 5 November 1959 in testifying at the hearings of the Judiciary SubCommittee which was investigating the "Communist Threat to the US through the Caribbean." In response to the question of whether Fidel was a Communist, General C. P. Cabell stated:

> Our information shows that the Cuban Communists do not consider him a Communist Party member or even a pro-Communist. On the other hand, they are delighted with the nature of his government, which was allowed the Communists opportunity -- free opportunity -- to organize, to propagandize, and to infiltrate. We know the Communists consider Castro a representative of the bourgeoise ... Our conclusion, therefore, is that Fidel Castro is not a Communist, however, he certainly is not anti-Communist. 43/

In an attempt to resolve, at least part of the dilemma a Related Mission Directive was approved on

6 November 1959 and "would remain in effect until further notice." The RMD stated in part as follows:

> For the moment, CIA operations should be carried out on the assumption that the revolutionary government is basically non-Communist, with legitimate reform goals that deserve US respect and support. Covert operations should support overt efforts to arrive at a rapprochement with the present government and to eliminate the conditions described above without resorting to forceful means.
>
> If it should be established that the Cuban government is Communist-led or Communist-dominated, or if that government cannot be swayed from adopting measures which intentionally or unintentionally accomplish Communist objectives, the question of direct attacks against Castro will be re-examined. In planning for such a contingency, each existing or new asset should be evaluated in terms of possible future utility from a paramilitary point of view, nor will the development or recruitment of assets be precluded merely because they lack a paramilitary capability. Under no circumstances would any asset be apprised of this contingency planning. In fact any disposition to undertake violent action should be promptly and emphatically discouraged pending a change in policy at the policy-making level. 44/

Even as the RMD was being dispatched to the field, another and more significant program was being evolved in Headquarters. On 11 December 1959, J. C. King, Chief, WH Division prepared a memorandum for the

Director of Central Intelligence, through the Deputy Director of Plans, forwarding a program having as its specific objective "The overthrow of Castro within one year, and his replacement by a junta friendly to the United States which will call for elections 6 months after assumption of office." To achieve this objective, Chief, WH/D put forward a program, to include among other items the following:

> 1. Clandestine radio attacks on Cuba, from liberal Caribbean countries.
>
> 2. Intrusion operations against Castro's TV and radio, to be mounted from within Cuba.
>
> 3. Formation of pro-US opposition groups to establish by force a controlled area within Cuba.

Colonel King then went on to suggest that:

> Thorough consideration be given to the elimination of Fidel Castro. None of those close to Fidel, such as his brother Raul or his companion Che Guevarra [*sic*], have the same mesmeric appeal to the masses. Many informed people believe that the disappearance of Fidel would greatly accelerate the fall of the present government.* 45/

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* The reader's attention is drawn to Appendix A (see page 296) which reproduces the original 11 December 1959 J. C. King memorandum to the DCI. In light of subsequent investigations, hearings, and publicity regarding the Agency's complicity in assassination

(footnote continued on following page)

As 1959 drew to a close, a final Special National Intelligence Estimate, "The Situation in the Caribbean through 1960," indicated that Castro was in to stay, despite internal difficulties. The SNIE saw no serious threat to Castro's continued rule, and it pointed out that if there was direct US intervention, "Most Cubans including the military, would react violently." 46/

As 1960 began, General Cabell, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, held a joint briefing

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plots aimed at Fidel Castro and others, pages 2 and 3 of Appendix A show two significant corrections in Allen Dulles's own handwriting to the text submitted by Col. King. In paragraph 3d, the phrase "thorough consideration be given to the *elimination* of Fidel Castro" carries Dulles's pencilled correction making the text read "removal from Cuba" rather than "elimination."

At a later point in the same paragraph the original text said "many informed people believe that the *disappearance* of Fidel would greatly accelerate the fall of the present government". Mr. Dulles has substituted the word "removal" for the word "disappearance." These significant changes in the text on the original copy of King's memorandum -- which the author has recovered -- support the contention that the author has made in the Foreword to this Volume that the component (WH/4) officially charged with the conduct of the Agency's anti-Castro program was neither charged with nor responsible for programs designed to assassinate Castro in the course of the Bay of Pigs Operation. Colonel King's memorandum of 11 December 1959, with the pencilled corrections noted above, was concurred in by Richard M. Bissell and approved by Allen W. Dulles on 12 December 1959.

(8 January 1960) on Cuba for the Department of State and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He reviewed the increasing hold that the Communist idealogy and those affiliated with the Communist Party were exerting the Castro government. At this time, the DDCI also discussed the need for increased covert and semi-covert programs aimed at Castro -- psychological warfare, political action, economic action, and paramilitary action, all of which had been conducted in some degree during the past year. 47/ This 8 January 1960 briefing can be used to denote the beginning of the serious anti-Castro programs by Central Intelligence Agency which would culminate at the Bay of Pigs.